impressive. There was a staircase of carved oak and a large mediaeval fireplace. Also many gold-framed portraits which Luella was sure were of the Ingatestone ancestors. The butler walked ahead. Luella glanced back to see two footmen carrying her trunk up the steps.

Then she realised that behind them the carriage in which they had come and in which now Mr Drago was sitting alone was turning round. She stopped still, and took a step back towards the door. She thought that there must be some mistake. Mr Drago had not realised that she wanted him to wait for her. Then she watched as to her amazement the horses were moving down the drive up which they had come.

She felt her heart sink. She could not imagine why Alberto Drago, who had seemed such a pleasant man, should behave in such a way. Then she knew the answer. Alberto Drago obviously had been given instructions by Signor Vecchio. She was not to be allowed to relinquish her task so lightly.

Because she had stopped, the butler was waiting for her to follow him. When she turned round he went ahead down the corridor. He opened the door of a room and as Luella and Enrico entered, he said: "His Grace is changing for dinner, Madam. I'll inform him of your arrival, but you may have to wait a short time before you can see His Grace."

"Thank you," Luella replied.

As the butler shut the door she saw that they were in a beautifully furnished room. There were pictures on the walls which she knew her mother would have

appreciated. There was also a multitude of treasures in cabinets and on tables which she knew would delight her, had she time to look at them.

For the moment, however, she could only worry that Mr Drago had left her in that strange manner. He had been so polite and courteous during the day. It had never struck her for one moment that he would abandon her on Signor Vecchio's instructions in the Duke's Castle.

What was more, she was suddenly aware that he had not, as she had expected he would, given her any money. Signor Vecchio had spoken of her being rewarded for taking Enrico to England. Mr Drago had paid for everything on the journey. Luella had not thought of asking him for the fee that she was to receive for bringing Enrico to England.

Now she was aware with a sinking of her heart that all she possessed were a few Italian coins of low denomination. It was the money Signor Vecchio had handed her before they left Milan. She realised with a sense of horror that she was in a very uncomfortable position. To leave the Castle she would now be obliged to ask the Duke to lend her some money to get back to London.

Enrico was running round the room. He found a snuff-box that was made like a ship and a piece of Dresden china in the form of a bird. Because he was excited he was talking about them in Italian. Luella, too worried to protest, answered him in the same language.

It was then the door opened and somebody came into the room. Luella was at the far end of it with